(a) whether various State Electricity Boards owe large sums of money to Railways;

(b) whether the Ministry of Power has pressed the SEBs to clear the arrears and pay to Railways the outstanding amounts; and

(c) if so, the results thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRIMATI JAYAWANTI MEHTA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Under the Scheme for One Time Settlement of SEBs, dues payable to the 8 CPSUs and the Railways by the SEBs as on 30-09-2001 are to be securitized by issue of 8.5% tax-free SLR bond of the respective State Governments, after waiver of 60% of interest/surcharge. Under this arrangement, Rs.700 crores would be securitized, as reported by the Railways. Further, under Tripartite Agreement (TPA), the SEBs are also to ensure payment of current bills through Letter of Credit and any amount defaulted would be recovered through adjustment against releases due to the respective State Governments on account of Plan Assistance, States' share of Central Taxes and any other Grant or loan given to the State by way of debiting their accounts maintained in the Reserve Bank of India. The TPA has been signed on 20-03-2003.

Apart from the above course of action. Ministry of Railways has informed that the following further steps have been taken by them to enforce the recovery of outstanding dues :—

1. Adjustment of outstanding dues against traction bills of some of the State Electricity Boards is also being carried out.

2. The Ministry of Railways has written to Chief Ministers of Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Delhi, Punjab, Haryana and West Bengal urging early steps for clearance of dues.

Privatisation of REC

4916. SHRI C.P. THIRUNAVUKKARASU: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government has put off the idea of privatization of Rural Electrification Corporation of India;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the financial assistance provided by REC to State Electricity Boards for development of rural electrification during the last three years; and

(d) the successes achieved in the field of rural electrification by it?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRIMATI JAYAWANTI MEHTA) : (a) Presently, there is no such move of the Government to privatize Rural Electrification Corporation of India.

(b) In view of above, question does not arise.

(c) The financial assistance provided by Rural Electrification Corporation (REC) to State Electricity Boards/Power Utilities for various rural electrification programmes during the last three years is given as under :—

2000-01 : Rs. 4058.13 Crores

2001-02 : Rs . 4666.13 Crores

2002-03 : Rs. 6471.00 Crores

(d) As a result of REC's financial support for implementation of different RE projects over the last three decades, about 3.05 lakh villages are reported to have been electrified under REC financed projects upto February, 2003. Similarly, out of a total of 134 lakh electric irrigation pumpsets reported to be energized in the country, over 80 lakh pumpsets are under REC financed projects.

Projects out of the purview of Rapid Power Development and Reforms Programme

†4917. SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN':
SHRI LAJPAT RAI :

Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that a number of under construction projects are out of purview of Rapid Power Development and Reforms Programme in the country;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.